

CORRECTED VERSION

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
29 July 2004 (29.07.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/063833 A2

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **G06F 3/023**

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/GB2004/000115

(22) International Filing Date: 9 January 2004 (09.01.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
0300798.6 11 January 2003 (11.01.2003) GB
0321772.6 17 September 2003 (17.09.2003) GB

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,

AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

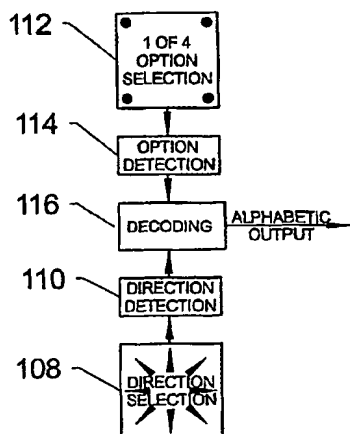
— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

(48) Date of publication of this corrected version:
9 September 2005

(15) Information about Correction:
see PCT Gazette No. 36/2005 of 9 September 2005, Section II

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: DATA INPUT SYSTEM



(57) **Abstract:** A data input system, with which a user can input letters of an alphabet, comprises: a system (112,108) for enabling the user to select one of four options and, for each selected option, to select one of eight directions; a system (114,110) for detecting the option and direction selected by the user; and a decoder (116) responsive to the detected option and direction and operable to interpret each of a number of combinations of such an option and such a direction, equal to the number of letters in the alphabet, as a respective letter of the alphabet. Directions may be selected by, for example, operating an eight-way joystick, making directional gestures on a touch-sensitive surface, or pressing different combinations of keys in a key array. Options may be selected by, for example, operating an four-way joystick, pressing one or more shift keys and/or by providing more than one direction selection system so that the user can select which direction selection system to use for a particular letter. Compared with conventional systems, the data input system does not require so frequent relocation of the user's finger (or fingers or thumb(s) or a stylus or the like held by the user) when inputting letters of an alphabet.

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